

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, May 20, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Paris, Hotel Vendôme. Monday, May 20th 1895. My dear Alec:

I have heard of you from Mamma tonight, she says that you had a beautiful time on the Potomac with Mr. Langley, I want full accounts of it. Mamma says everything is so perfectly lovely at Twin Oaks, it makes me wild to be in the country whenever it is warm. Here it is so cold that I am quite content to be in the city. But I wish I could see the glorious rhododendron she writes of. The children are shouting back and forth, so I am not sure if this is going to be a nice letter. If it isn't please excuse me as I am tired. We went this morning on a shopping expedition to the Bon Marche, lunched at a tiny restaurant near by, and then drove to an American physician recommended by Miss Duncan to get the address of a dentist for Elsie. Obtaining this after half an hours waiting we drove then and remained there I think fully three hours. First waiting and then having Elsie's eyes examined. She has ocm complained lately that they ached, that she could not see out of one of them at times, and that she felt cross-eyed when reading, and the letters were blurred, so I felt that I could not delay having her eyes examined. The doctor confessed himself puzzled by her case, that the condition of her eyes was quite uncommon. He will examine them again and give her some glasses. He said she had very pretty eyes, but they were the kind that produced headaches, and she should live much in the open air, not sit up late or everwork. But he said there was nothing serious the matter at all.

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After giving you forty hours grace I wrote to Madame la Superiewie de l' Assomption and announced my desire to enter her convent at the earliest opportunity. This she informs me will be Wednesday afternoon. Now I hope you won't cable objections because they will come too late. The die is cast, the step irrevocable! Doesn't this sound tragic? I am so pleased however, for I really have been unable to enjoy our pretty rooms here, for they are most pretty and comfortable. Our hotel bill for four days and a half comes to four hundred and seventy three francs, and this does not include our lunch which we always take outside. This makes about six dollars a day a piece, or rather it doesn't, as Charles is only charged six francs a day. Our light is electric and costs us five francs whether we use one point or all.

The children are very considerate of me, and in some ways both seem younger than when we were in Italy. Elsie is very babyish in spite of her seventeen years. She is so proud of herself for being seventeen, one would think by the way she talks that she were seven. She admires her own pretty face with a "naïf" frankness that is very funny, she is always calling on me to know if she doesn't look pretty, hasn't she a nice color, isn't her figure nice, don't I think her veil becoming, why are her eyes

round, is that why they are so pretty? I don't think you could call the child really vain she is so very innocent about it.

I have cooked the children's nightly cup of cocoa over my alcohol lamp, tucked them in bed and now come back to finish my letter. I don't know what I have said, but no matter.

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Tomorrow we go shopping some more with Miss Duncan, and in the afternoon if I can get her to go with us and it is all right I will take the children to the garden party at our convent. Miss Duncan offers to procure me a card of invitation to the party at the consulate tomorrow, but I don't want to go.

Oh — by the way, why should Pickering Dodge be thought of sufficient importance to have his engagement to a Mrs. McKeown of Baltimore cabled across to the "Herald" here? The last I heard Aileen and he "understood" one another. I wonder how she feels. Poor old Aileen how did she happen to miss her vocation of being a good mother. I think it a shame she never married, I am afraid a good many people are laughing at her now, and it is a pity for she is so good and kind.

Goodnight my dear. Are you just waking up from your morning nap, or are you travelling to Beinn Bhreagh, where are you? I thought you would cable when you left Washington, yet if you staid you would cable too wouldn't you?

Ever yours,